



United States Military Academy Band  
West Point, New York 10996



## West Point Dixie Players

The West Point Dixie Players, who premiered in February of 1997, are among the newer additions to the chamber groups within the United States Military Academy Band.

Members from the Concert Band and Jazz Knights make up this six-piece Dixie group. The musicians create a festive, upbeat, old-time sound at such events as Fat Tuesday for the United States Corps of Cadets and at the New Jersey Botanical Gardens.

The West Point Dixie Players add a new dimension to musical entertainment at West Point and in the Tri-State area.

**SERGEANT FIRST CLASS GERALD CATES - TUBA**, is from Tullahoma, Tennessee and has been a member of the U.S. Military Academy Band since June of 1989. He received a bachelor's degree from Tennessee Technological University in 1985, and a master's degree from the University of Illinois in 1986. Prior to joining the band, SFC Cates was Director of Bands for the Marshall County Public Schools in Lewisburg, Tennessee. In addition to performing with the Concert Band, SFC Cates is a member of the West Point Tuba Quartet, Regimental Brass Quintet and the West Point Dixie Players. He is also the concert band librarian.

**SERGEANT FIRST CLASS RON FLEISCHMAN - TROMBONE**, from Darlington, Pennsylvania, came to the Academy Band in February of 1996. He holds a bachelor's degree from Duquesne University and a master's degree from Youngstown State University. Since joining the Army in 1992, SFC Fleischman attended the Army Element, School of Music and performed in the band at Ft. Gordon, Georgia. Additionally, he has played with the Augusta Symphony Orchestra. SFC Fleischman is a trombonist in the Jazz Knights.

**SERGEANT FIRST CLASS RACHEL GRASSO - CLARINET**, from Houston, Texas, came to the Military Academy Band in 1988. She earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Houston and a master's degree from Indiana University. SFC Grasso serves as the E-flat clarinetist in the Concert Band. Additionally, she has been an adjunct professor at the State University of New York at New Paltz and a free-lance musician in the Hudson Valley.

**SERGEANT FIRST CLASS ERIC SHEFFLER - DRUMS**, is a native of Pittsburg, Kansas. He returned to the Academy Band in January of 2002 serving as a Rudimental Drummer in the Hellcats. Beginning in the summer of 2004, SFC Sheffler assumed the duties of Drum Major. He previously served in the Hellcats from 1983 – 1994 and was the assistant drum major of the marching band as well. While away from West Point, SFC Sheffler completed his Masters Degree in Percussion Performance at Pittsburg State University. He also taught classes in Percussion Techniques, Applied Percussion, Music Fundamentals, Basic Conducting, Wind Ensemble, and Marching Band. Additionally, SFC Sheffler is an adjunct faculty member at Marist College and a freelance percussion arranger for competitive marching bands throughout the Midwest. SFC Sheffler is a founding member of the West Point Percussion Group.

**STAFF SERGEANT BRIAN BROELMANN - BANJO**, has been a member of the United States Military Academy band since 2001. He holds degrees in music education and music performance from the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam, where he studied with Dr. Timothy Mcallister. SSG Broelmann has appeared in a number of venues, including regional, national, and international saxophone conferences, both as soloist and in chamber settings. In addition to his duties as saxophonist, SSG Broelmann appears as banjo soloist with the USMA Concert Band and performs with the West Point Dixie Players.

**STAFF SERGEANT JON LEONARD - TRUMPET**, returned to the Academy Band in August of 1998. He previously served in both the Hellcats and the Jazz Knights, from 1992 to 1995. SSG Leonard attended the University of North Texas, earning a bachelor's degree in jazz studies and a master's degree in trumpet performance. While at UNT, he played with the renowned One O'clock Lab Band. He pursued doctoral studies at the University of Northern Colorado at Greeley and was most recently a visiting instructor of brass at Adams State College, in Alamosa, Colorado. He currently plays bugle in the Hellcats. SSG Leonard is from Fairbanks, Alaska.